



# DECP

## Newsletter

December 2019

### BPS and DECP membership survey

Earlier this year the society conducted a major survey of its members, looking in particular at the pressures they are under in their working lives.

Initial analysis of the 6,000 responses shows clear themes emerging. Significant numbers of members are worried about excessive workplace demands and feel these are affecting their ability to provide the best care.

There is also a strong theme of funding and resources not matching increasing demand and creating gaps in the services that psychologists offer.

### The findings for educational psychologists show

- They are among the most likely to report signs of stress and burnout.
- They are the group most likely to intend to leave the profession within the next five years.
- Some 60.8 per cent of respondents who work as an educational psychologist in their main role routinely work more than their contracted hours.
- Nearly half of respondents who work as EPs say they are emotionally exhausted.
- They were more likely than most other kinds of psychologist to report not having experienced any barriers when entering the profession

In response to these initial findings, the chair of the DECP Dr Gavin Morgan said:

'The DECP welcome the results of the BPS member survey, though at times it makes sobering reading for the educational psychology profession. These findings have to be linked to increased workloads and austerity cuts within local authorities.'

'At a time when our skills and experiences are needed the most, our local authority EP services are being stretched to breaking point. This is a serious situation, and one that needs urgently addressing. Recruitment and retention issues need to be addressed through improved financial situations for local authorities.'

These findings are in line with findings from a DECP Survey run earlier in the year. A hundred per cent of respondents working in fully or partially traded services were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with their workload.

Most EPs in both service models said that an increase in education health and care plan requests and the diminishing workforce have added to time pressures and workload.

When they are fully analysed, the survey's results will form the basis for the Society's work on your behalf. The BPS chief executive Sarb Bajwa says:

'The BPS is your professional body, and we will be using these results to demand that all of our members have workplaces with the positive and supportive culture which the research done by psychologists has shown to be so important.'

### In this issue

1. BPS and DECP membership survey
2. Updating guidance on psychological advice
3. From Poverty to Flourishing
4. DECP position paper on zero-tolerance behaviour policies
5. EP pre-training event
6. Future event on children's social and emotional wellbeing
7. A DECP book on children's mental health

### Get in Touch

🐦 @DECPOfficial

✉ DECPEnquiries@bps.org.uk

Edited by:

**Dan O'Hare**

### Updating guidance on psychological advice

There is great pressure on EP services to meet the demand of the EHC needs assessment process. A key challenge identified by a number of professional groups is to protect children's rights and maintain the professionalism of educational psychologists.

To this end the DECP, AEP, NAPEP, course directors and service leads are working together to update the guidance for EPs on statutory psychology advice.

A very successful event was held recently about this issue. More than 100 people attended and a number of principal EPs gave presentations on the impact of legislative changes on statutory demands. Nine broad topics were discussed, including specificity, quality assurance and the nature of psychological advice.

A further meeting is planned to pull together all the strands and ideas generated on the day from group activities.

Special thanks to the AEP who funded the day.

### From Poverty to Flourishing

Dr Gavin Morgan (DECP chair) has been working with the BPS policy team to support next year's policy priority [From Poverty to Flourishing](#). It was chosen against the backdrop

of 4.5m children in the UK living in poverty and rising infant mortality rates, particularly for children born into a poor family.

### DECP position paper on zero-tolerance behaviour policies

Earlier this year we published a highly successful position paper on [children's right to play](#). It has been viewed thousands of times online and received a high level of national media coverage. We're now looking to write a position paper on the use of zero-tolerance behaviour policies.

Working alongside the policy team from the BPS, our aim is to establish a position based on psychological theory, research and EP practice. As with our paper on play, we're keen to hear from and collaborate with people from diverse professions.

### EP pre-training event

On Saturday 2 November the DECP hosted its first pre-training event at the BPS London offices. The event was a huge success with 100 per cent of people saying they would recommend that interested friends and colleagues attend a similar event.

The day had input on training routes and the role of the EP, discussion groups about hot topics and a question-and-answer session.

We're grateful to all those who attended for their participation and enthusiasm. Your feedback will help improve our future events.

Many thanks go to the committee members who supported this event, particularly Dr Sarah Chestnutt and the members of our TEP association group for organising.

## Future event on children's social and emotional wellbeing

Last year the DECP hosted a very successful event on children's social, emotional and mental health. We're aware that there is an increasing focus by local authorities on theories of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACE).

So we are looking to host a CPD event that takes a critical approach to trauma-informed and ACEs-based approaches. We'll look to hold in the autumn of 2020 to complement the special issue of Educational and Child Psychology due in December.

## A DECP book on children's mental health

EPs work with children, young people, families and schools every day, with mental health and wellbeing as central concerns. As a professional and learned body we think there is a good opportunity to make a clear statement about how we are conceptualising children's mental health needs.

We're currently scoping the literature and would be keen to hear from members who would like to

contribute to a book that adopts an ecosystemic perspective to children's mental health and wellbeing.

We're particularly interested in considering and addressing the social determinants of mental health and wellbeing.

If you would like to contribute, please contact DECP chair-elect [Vivian Hill](#).